

ILLINOIS POLICE

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GREAT DEBATE BETWEEN
DOUGLAS AND LINCOLN!
At Freeport, Ill., Aug. 27, 1857.

Mr. Lincoln's Speech.—*And on Saturday last, Judge Douglas and myself first met in public discussion. He spoke one hour—* an hour and a half, and he replied for half an hour. The order is now reversed, and I am to speak an hour, he an hour and a half, and he will reply for half an hour. I propose to devote myself during half an hour to the scope of what was brought within the range of the half hour speech at Ottawa. Of course there was brought within the scope in that half hour's speech something of his own opening speech. In the course of that opening argument, Judge Douglas proposed to me seven distinct interrogatories. In my speech of an hour and a half, I intended to answer other parts of his speech, and incidentally, I thought, and as one of the interrogatories then proposed, I anticipated that I should be asked

I would answer the rest of his interrogatories. I had made no intimation at the time of the proposition, nor did he in his reply allude at all to that suggestion of mine. I do him no injustice in saying that he occupied at least half of his reply in dealing with me as though I had refused to answer his interrogatories. I now propose that I will answer any of the interrogatories upon condition that he will answer questions from me not exceeding the same number. I give him an opportunity to respond. The Judge remains silent. I now propose to you that I will answer his interrogatories, whether he answers mine or not, (applause,) and that after I have done so, I shall propound mine to him.—[Applause.]

I have supposed myself since the organization of the Republican party at Bloomington, in May,

Sch, bound is a party man, by the platforms of the party then and since. It in any interrogatories which I shall answer, I go beyond the scope of what is within these platforms, it will be perceived that no one is responsible but myself.

Q. 1. "I desire to know whether Lincoln to-day stands, as he did in 1854, in favor of the unconditional repeal of the fugitive slave law."

A. "I do not now, nor never did, stand in favor of the unconditional repeal of the fugitive slave law." (Cries of "Good," "Good.")

Q. 2. "I desire him to answer whether he stands pledged to-day, as he did in 1854, against the admission of any more slave States into the Union, even if the people want them?"

Q 3. "I want to know whether he stands pledged against the admission of a new State into the Union, with such a Constitution as the people of that State may see fit to make?"

A. I do not stand to-day pledged to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.

Q. 5. I desire him to answer whether he stands pledged to the prohibition of the slave trade between the States.

A. I do not stand pledged to the prohibition of the slave trade between the different States.

Q. 6. "I desire to know whether he stands pledged to prohibit slavery in all the Territories of the United States, North as well as South of the Missouri Compromise line."

A. I am implicitly, if not expressly, pledged to a belief in the *right and duty* of Congress to prohibit slavery in all the United States Territories. (Great applause.)

Q. 7. "I desire him to answer whether he is opposed to the acquisition of any new territory upon which slavery is first introduced therein."

A. I am in general opposed to honest acquisition of territory; and in any given case I would or I might not oppose such acquisition accordingly as I might think such acquisition would or would not agitate the slavery question among ourselves. (Cries of good, good.)

N. Now, my friends, it will be perceived upon an examination of these questions and answers, that so far as I have only said that I was not *pledged* to this, that, or the other, The Judge, I have answered his interrogatories to ask me anything more than this, and I have answered in strict accordance with the interrogatories, and have answered truly that I am not *pledged* at all upon any of the points to which I have answered. But I am not disposed to hang upon the exact form of his interrogatory. I am rather disposed to take up at least some of

These questions, and state what I really think upon them.

As to the first one in regard to the fugitive slave law, I have never hesitated to say, and do not now hesitate to say, that I think, under the constitution of the United States, the people of the Southern States are entitled to a congressional fugitive slave law. Having said that, I have had nothing to say in regard to the existing fugitive slave law further than that I think it should have been framed so as to be free from some of the objections that pertain to it, without lessening its efficiency. And inasmuch as we are not now in agitation in regard to the alteration or modification of the law, I have no wish to be the man to introduce it as a new subject of agitation upon the general question of slavery.

In regard to the other question of whether I am

pledged to the admission of any more slave States into the Union, I state to you very frankly that I would be exceedingly sorry ever to be put in a position of having to pass upon that question. I should be exceedingly glad to know that there never would be another slave State admitted into the Union (applause); but I must add that, if slavery shall be kept out of the Territories, during the territorial existence of any one given Territory, and the people shall, having a fair chance and a clear field, when they come to adopt the constitution, do so, without anything coming to adopt a slave constitution, unmodified by the actual presence of the institution among them, I see no alternative, if we own the country, but to

The third interrogatory is answered by the answer to the second, it being, as I conceive, the same as the second.

The fourth one is in regard to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. In relation to that, I have no mind very distinctly made up. I believe that I should be glad to see slavery abolished in the District of Columbia. ["Cries of "good, good."] I believe that Congress possesses the constitutional power to abolish it. Yet, as a member of Congress, I should not, with my present views, be in favor of *endeavoring* to abolish slavery in the

In regard to the fifth interrogatory, I must say, as I have said as often before, that the question of the abolition of slavery, and the question of the compensation to the owners, are two distinct and separate things, and that, therefore, between the different States, there is a difference of opinion. I have no objection to the compensation to the owners, if it can be made in any way, and I have no objection to the abolition of slavery, if it can be made in any way. I have no objection to the compensation to the owners, if it can be made in any way, and I have no objection to the abolition of slavery, if it can be made in any way.

truly answer, as I have, that I am *pledged* to nothing about it. It is a subject to which I have not given that mature consideration that would make me feel authorized to state a position so as to hold myself utterly bound by it. In other words, that question has never been prominently enough before me to induce me to investigate whether or not I have any qualifications to state a position. I could investigate it if I had sufficient time, to bring myself to a conclusion upon that subject, but I have not done so, and I say so frankly to you here, and to Judge Douglas. I must say, however, that, if I should be of opinion that Congress does pos-

ness the constitutional power to abolish slavery among the different States, I should still not be in favor of the exercise of that power, unless upon some other operative principle as conceived in answer to what I have said in relation to the abolition of slavery, in the District of Columbia.

My answer as to whether I desire that slavery should be prohibited in all the Territories of the United States is full and explicit within itself, and cannot be made clearer by any comments of mine. So I suppose in regard to the question whether I am opposed to the prohibition of slavery in the territories, I have said all that I can say. My answer is, unless slavery is first prohibited in every territory, I am not in favor of its prohibition in any territory; and I am sure that I could add nothing more of the kind.

Now in all this, the Judge has me and he lingers on the record. I suppose he had flattered himself that I was really entertaining one set of opinions for one place and another set for another place. I am now afraid to say that I place what I uttered at another. What I am sure of is, I suppose I say to a vast audience as strongly tender to Abolitionism as any audience in the State of Illinois, and I believe I am saying that which, if it would be affirmed to any persons and rendered their enemies to myself, would be offensive to

The first one is—

Question 1. If the people of Kansas shall, by means entirely unobjectionable in all other respects, adopt a State constitution, and ask admission into the Union, and *before* they have the same number of inhabitants according to the English bill—some ninety-three thousand—will they not rate in admitting them? [Applause.]

Q. 2. Can a people of a United States Territory in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a State Constitution? [Renewed applause.]

Q. 3. If the Supreme Court of the United States should hold that the States cannot exclude slavery from their limits, are you in favor of acquiescing in, adopting, and following such decisions as a rule of political action? [Loud applause.]

Q. 4. Are you in favor of acquiring additional territory, in disregard of how such acquisition may affect the nation on the slavery question. [Cries

In this connection, I will notice the charge which he has introduced in relation to Mr. Chase's amendment. I thought that I had chased that amendment out of Mr. Lincoln's brain at Ottawa; [laughter] but it seems that it still haunts his imagination.

people, and I must not yet satisfy. I must not only satisfy the people, but I must satisfy that question further. He is a lawyer, and has been a member of Congress, and has occupied his time and amused you by telling you about parliamentary proceedings. He ought to have known better than to try to palm off his miserable propositions upon this intelligent audience. "Good," and cheers. The Nebraska bill provided that the legislative power, and authority of the said Territories, shall extend to all rightful subjects of legislation consistent with the Constitution and the Constitution of the United States. It did not make any exceptions as to slavery, but gave all the power that it was possible for Congress to give, without violating the constitution, to the territorial legislature with no exception or limitation on the subject of slavery at all. The language of the bill

which I have voted, gave the full power and the full authority over the subject of slavery, affirmatively and negatively, to introduce it or exclude it, to the free constitution of the United States could permit. What would Mr. Chase say to such an amendment? Nothing. He offered his amendment for the identical purpose for which Mr. Lincoln is using it, to enable demagogues in our country to try and deceive the people. ["Good, let him again," and cheers.] This amendment was to this effect. It provided that the Legislature should have the power to exclude slavery: General Cass suggested "why not give the power to introduce as well as exclude?" The answer was, they have the power already in the bill to do so. The amendment was adopted. The amendment would be adopted if he put the alternative proposition, and so make it fair both ways, but

did not yield. He offered it for the purpose of saving it rejected. He offered it, as he has himself counted over and over again, simply to make capital out of it for the stump. He expected that it would be capital for small politicians in the country, and that they would make an effort to deceive the people with it. He was not mistaken, for Lincoln is carrying it off very admirably. "Good, good," says Lincoln now, that the Nebraska bill without Chase's amendment, gave all the power which the Constitution would permit. Could Congress confer any more? "No, no." Could Congress go beyond the Constitution of the country? We gave all a full grant, with no exception in regard to slavery one way or the other. We left that question as we left all others, to be decided by the people for themselves, just as they pleased. I will not o-

The third question which Mr. Lincoln presented to the Supreme Court of the United States was, "if a State of the Union cannot extend slavery to new territories, is it bound to do it?" He asked that Lincoln should ask such a question, ("A school boy knows better.") Yes, a school boy does know better. Mr. Lincoln's object is to cast a slur and a bad reputation upon the Supreme Court. He knows that there never was but one man in America, gaining any degree of intelligence or decency,

It is never for argument pretend-such a thing. It is true that the Washington Union, in an article published on the 15th of last December, did put forth the charge, and I have no doubt that the editor of the Senate, in a speech which Mr. Lincoln now pretends was against the President,—the Union had claimed that slavery had a right to go into the free States, and that any provision in the constitution or laws of the free States to the contrary were null and void. I denounced it in the Senate, as I said before, and I was the first man who did. Lincoln's friends, Trumbull, and Stewart, and Hale, and Wilson, and the whole Black Republican sale of the Union were the first to follow me in denouncing it. (Cheers.) And what was the reply made to me on that occasion? Mr. Toombs, of course, got up and undertook to lecture me on

ground that I ought not to have deemed the article worthy of notice, and ought not to have replied to it; that there was not one man, woman or child south of the Potomac, in any slave State, who did not repudiate any such imputation. Mr. Lincoln knows that that reply was true, on the point of fact, and that the question is a question of right. I will ask you, suppose Mr. Lincoln should stand before you, would I sanction it? (laughter), and it could be as gentled in me to ask him, in the rent he stole a horse, what ought he to do to this him. He casts an imputation upon the Supreme Court of the United States by supposing that they would violate the constitution of the United States. I tell you that such a thing is not possible. There is. It would be an act of moral enormity. I have no doubt that the people of the North, themselves would never in

The fourth question of Mr. Lincoln is "Are you in favor of acquiring additional territory in regard as to how such acquisition may affect the nation on the slavery question?" This question is very inelegantly and cunningly put.

The Black Republican creed lays it down expressly, that under no circumstances shall we acquire any new territory under the flag. It is just as plain as the sun in the day, that the answer to the question, "ask Mr. Lincoln whether he is in favor of that proposition," are, on addressing Mr. Lincoln opposed to the acquisition of any more territory, under any circumstances, unless slavery is prohibited in it. That he does not like to answer. When I ask him whether he stands up to that article in the plat-

of his party, he turns, Yankee fashion, and without answering it, asks me whether I am in favor of acquiring territory which regard to how it may affect the issue of the slavery question. I answer him that whenever it becomes necessary, in our growth and progress to acquire new territory, that I am in favor of it, without reference to the question of slavery, and when we have acquired it, I will leave the people free to do as they please, either to make it slave or free territory, as they prefer. It is idle to tell me you that we have territory enough. Our fathers supposed that we had enough when our territory extended to the Mississippi river, but in less than half a century we had acquired all the territory we needed more, and the Louisiana Territory, from the West Branch of the Mississippi to the British possessions, was acquired. Then we acquired

We have enough now for the present, but this is a young and growing nation. It swarms as fast as a hive of bees, and as new swarms are sent out each year, there must be hives in which they can gather and make their honey. Good, and how can this fifty million be the same people that has hastened to this country for the last fifteen years continues, every foot of vacant land, between this and the Pacific ocean, owned by the United States, will be occupied. Will you not continue to increase at the end of fifteen years as well as now? I tell you, increase, and multiply, and expand, is the law of this nation's existence. [Good.] You cannot limit this great republic by mere boundary lines, saying, this far shall we go, no farther. No, no. Any man would say, I will go as far as I please.

"I am an old man, very old, that he is big enough, and must grow up larger, and, in order to prevent his growth, put a hoop around him to keep him to his present size. What would be the result? Either he hops must burst and be rent asunder, or the child must die. So it would be with this great nation. With our natural increase, growing with rapidity unknown to any other part of the globe, with the tide of emigration that is fleeing from despotism in the Old World, pouring over our borders like a constant torrent pouring into this country, that require more land, more territory upon which to settle, and just as fast as our interests and our destiny require additional territory in the north, in the south, or on the islands of the ocean, I am for it, and when we acquire it, will save the people, according to the Nebraska bill,

I trust now that Mr. Lincoln will deem himself answered by his four points. He raked his brain as much in devising these four questions, that he exhausted himself, and had not strength enough to invent the others. (Laughter.) As soon as he is able to hold a council with his advisers, Lovejoy, Farnsworth, and Fred Douglass, he will frame and propound others. (Good, good, etc.) Renewed laughter, in which Mr. Lincoln heartily joined, saying, that he hoped with their aid to get seven questions, the first asking him, by Judge Douglas, and the others *consequenter* (even.) "Do you think that any man who says, 'Good, I have no doubt that they are all good men.' (White, white.) I have reason to recollect that some peo-

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